

Draft Letter to Congressional Members in response to June 24th Letter to U.S. Fish and
Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service in re: the Bay Delta
Conservation Plan

July 9, 2008

Rep George Miller
Rep Ellen Tauscher
Rep. Mike Thompson
Rep, Doris Matsui
Rep. Jerry McNerney

Dear Representatives Miller, Tauscher, Thompson, Matsui and McNerney:

The members of the Steering Committee of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan were provided with copies of your June 24, 2008 letter to Messrs. Jim Balsiger of the National Marine Fisheries Service and Dale Hall of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the topic of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP).

Your letter makes a number of points and posits important questions with which we too are focused upon as our efforts progress. While the two fishery services will address those points and questions directly in their response to you, we would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Steering Committee to share our general thoughts and express our interest in meeting with you and other members of the California Congressional delegation to brief you more fully on our current and future efforts.

The BDCP planning process is led by a twenty Member Steering Committee comprised of a wide range of water and environmental interests who share a commitment to the Delta and to the success of this long-term conservation planning endeavor. In addition, the relevant state and federal resource and wildlife agencies serve in an *ex officio* capacity. We have several core goals: to contribute to the long-term conservation of those species covered by the Plan and the productivity of the habitats upon which they depend, and to contribute to the long-term reliability of water supplies that are currently conveyed through the Delta. Enclosed please find a brief synopsis of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan, which goes into more detail on our planning efforts to date.

The Delta is not only an invaluable estuary but also the essential link on which 25 million Californians and much of the state's economy depend for their water supplies. Your letter focuses on many of the important environmental issues that will have to be addressed in the process of repairing the Delta. But as you know, California's Delta Vision Task Force has concluded that restoring the Delta environment and restoring reliability to California's water delivery system are co-equal and inseparably linked objectives. We cannot succeed at one without also doing the other.

We fully recognize that the Delta is in serious crisis, both from an environmental perspective and a water supply perspective. The recent losses to the salmon fishing

industry mentioned in your letter are only one small part of the hundreds of millions of dollars worth of damage that California is suffering this year due to crop losses, working families displaced, and businesses large and small damaged – all due to water shortages.

Our shared goal is the development of a durable and effective conservation plan to address a number of the core problems confronting the Delta that will be scientifically and legally defensible. We believe that short-term fixes will not work because the conveyance system itself is fundamentally antiquated and out-of-date; fundamental change in that system is needed. We further believe that continued month-to-month ad-hoc court-room battles will not work for the long-term, and we seek a better way. We fully appreciate the difficulties of the challenges we face, and we ask for – and will need – your assistance and that of the entire Congressional delegation if we are to succeed.

We would like to express our appreciation for your continuing oversight of efforts to protect and restore the long-term health and productivity of the Delta. We share that perspective, and would like in closing to request an opportunity to meet with you and your staffs in the coming weeks to brief you more fully on the details of our considerable efforts. We will be in touch with your offices to pursue the appropriate arrangements.

Sincerely,

Enclosure

cc. J. Balsiger

D. Hall

Other Members, California Congressional Delegation